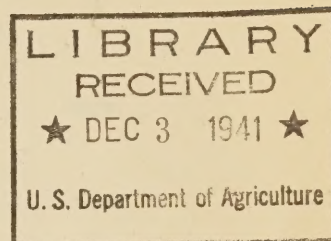


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

In Cooperation With
HAND COUNTY LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE
and
SOUTH DAKOTA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION,
RURAL SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



FARMERS STUDY THEIR COMMUNITIES
IN
HAND COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA

by
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PREFACE

The following statement by N. E. Beers, Secretary of the Hand County Land Use Planning Committee, tells the need for studying rural communities in the county, and the advantage of having the farm people do the major part of the work themselves.

Besides meeting the specific need for having detailed information about the people of the county, their backgrounds, and their churches, schools, and other social institutions, this job of describing the rural communities is a most welcome addition to *Land Use Planning*. County Extension Agents everywhere will recognize the real value of having rural communities mapped so that rural organizations may have as their basis areas of common interest.

Naturally the local people will more actively support a solution of a problem if that solution is one to which they have contributed. Consequently, perhaps the most important point about this community delineation job is that it has been done by the farm men and women. This story of how the local people participated should help other counties to do similar work in community organization.

The primary purpose of this report is to outline a procedure whereby farm people in a given county can study and delineate the neighborhoods and communities in their own areas. Studying communities is not a new idea, but the method by which farmers assume the major responsibility differs from the usual method of having the technician do the job. In Hand County the technician acted in an advisory and consulting capacity only. This method is offered as a practical example of how farm people themselves, with some technical assistance, may study a problem and work out a solution. The local committeemen who worked on this job have had their report reviewed and accepted by the County Agricultural Planning Committee.

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PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The Problem and The Need

Shortly after the unified county planning program had started in Hand County, S. Dak.; in 1939, a request came from the county planning committee that a study be made which would bring to the committee factual information concerning social institutions, population, and living standards.

After some brief work on the above social factors, the county land use planning committee indicated that a delineation and analysis of rural communities in the county was needed. More specifically, these were the questions asked:

Where are the neighborhood and community areas in the county within which people are accustomed to associate and work with each other?

What are the trends in community organizations?

How do the people regard their institutions?

Are new communities replacing older ones?

What are the principal factors which tend to make people associate with each other, and thereby have a distinct sense of "belonging together"?

PROCEDURE

Agricultural planning was undertaken with farmers participating and the task of studying the community was worked out by the farmers themselves, who knew their own neighborhoods and communities. As the townships of Hand County have a range of only 15 to 40 families, it is not unusual for a farmer to know personally all the families of his township and possibly those of the adjoining township.

The general plan for studying the rural communities was discussed at a meeting of the county land use planning committee in Hand County, S. Dak., in December 1939. The county committee took the initiative on administrative procedure and suggested that each of the 40 township committees appoint a subcommittee which would do the actual work. The county agent arranged 10 district meetings (4 township committees meeting jointly) and each of the 40 township committees appointed their subcommittee members. By January 1, 1940 the 40 subcommittees were organized. Usually the subcommittee members were the older residents in the township or at least those who knew intimately their neighbors, the history of settlement, and the community-life pattern of the township.

Accordingly, plans were laid whereby local people and technical assistants from the Rural Sociology Department of the State Agricultural Experiment Station and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics could work together. The job was outlined to the subcommittee members by a Bureau of Agricultural Economics technician with emphasis on the fact that they were to do the work with whatever assistance he could give them. The purpose of studying the community was essentially to assist in pointing the way toward a better rural life, a more rational and equitable participation in the planning program, and a recognition on the part of the local people of the place their own social institutions should have in rural living.

After the meeting of the subcommittee with the technician, it was decided that much of the work could be done by the members in their homes. The following procedure¹ was outlined:

(1) The subcommittee members from each of the townships first located churches, schools, and halls on the township maps. Then a family location map was prepared, which showed the location of each family in the township and included the number of people living on each farmstead. It was then possible for the farmers to make a rural-farm population estimate as of January 1940.

(2) The next step was to outline church attendance areas, areas of predominant nationalities, and trade areas. This, too, was done on a township basis by the farmer committeemen.

(3) After these two steps were completed, the committeemen were asked to outline neighborhood areas--those areas where the people "neighbor" with each other, the children attend the same public school or Sunday School, the men exchange work, the contacts are face-to-face, and there is a sense of belonging. Within these areas of common interest are usually found a church, school, or hall.

(4) The farmers then pointed out that people from more than one neighborhood have enough in common to meet together, if questions arise involving a larger area than one neighborhood. These neighborhoods were indicated. It was from this grouping of neighborhoods that the larger areas were outlined, those areas which local people call their community.

(5) Thus the working groups completed a total of six maps on a township basis showing: (a) churches, schools, and community halls, (b) family location, (c) church affiliation areas, (d) nationality areas, (e) trade areas, (f) neighborhood and community areas.

¹Schedule forms and sample plats used are included in Appendix.

(6) These six maps from the 40 townships were brought into the office of the county agent and coordinated by the technician. It was his job to prepare six county maps from the township maps. As each subcommittee member drew the various areas only to the boundary of his own township, it was necessary to dovetail some of the areas so that the township plats would all coincide. The technician and the committee members consulted frequently in this consolidation process. The final county maps were sent back to the members for checking and approval.

(7) The technician then gathered supplementary material, including maps of roads, school districts, rural free delivery routes, telephone lines, soil surveys, and geological surveys. This material, which was obtained from local, State, and Federal sources was made available to committee members to supplement their own data and to aid in the refinement of area boundaries.

(8) After all of the county consolidations had been completed by the technician with the assistance of the subcommittee members, a report was prepared and submitted to the county land use planning committee for consideration.

From this cooperative effort of local people, with technical assistance, a product resulted which represented their own ideas of the community and neighborhood locations in their county.

AREA STUDIED

Hand County extends 48 miles from north to south and 30 miles from east to west; each township is 6 miles square. The county, in its general aspects, is a level prairie with few variations: the so-called Bald Mountains or rough, hilly land in the northwest corner of the county; the Ree Hills, an elevation extending in a southwesterly direction from the village of Ree Heights and on down the western edge of the county; the Wessington Hills which jut into the county at the southeastern corner; and a rolling terrain in the northeast.

Nine-tenths of the land area was in farms in 1935, according to the agricultural census of that year, the average size of farm ranging from 351 acres in the central part of the county to 960 acres in the Ree Hills area. The hilly sections are well adapted to stock raising and animal-specialty farms, while the remainder of the area is devoted to cash-grain and general farming.

POPULATION CHANGES

The reports of the committeemen reveal a downward trend in farm population. In 1930, according to the Federal Census, 7,151 people were residing on farms in Hand County; the 1935 Federal Agricultural Census counted 6,116 farm people; while the farm population reported by the township subcommittees, as of January 1, 1940, was an estimated 4,800. Farm population of the county decreased by 14.5 percent in the 5 years from 1930-35, and by 21.5 percent in the period 1935-40. For the 10-year period, 1930-40; there was a loss of 32.9 percent.

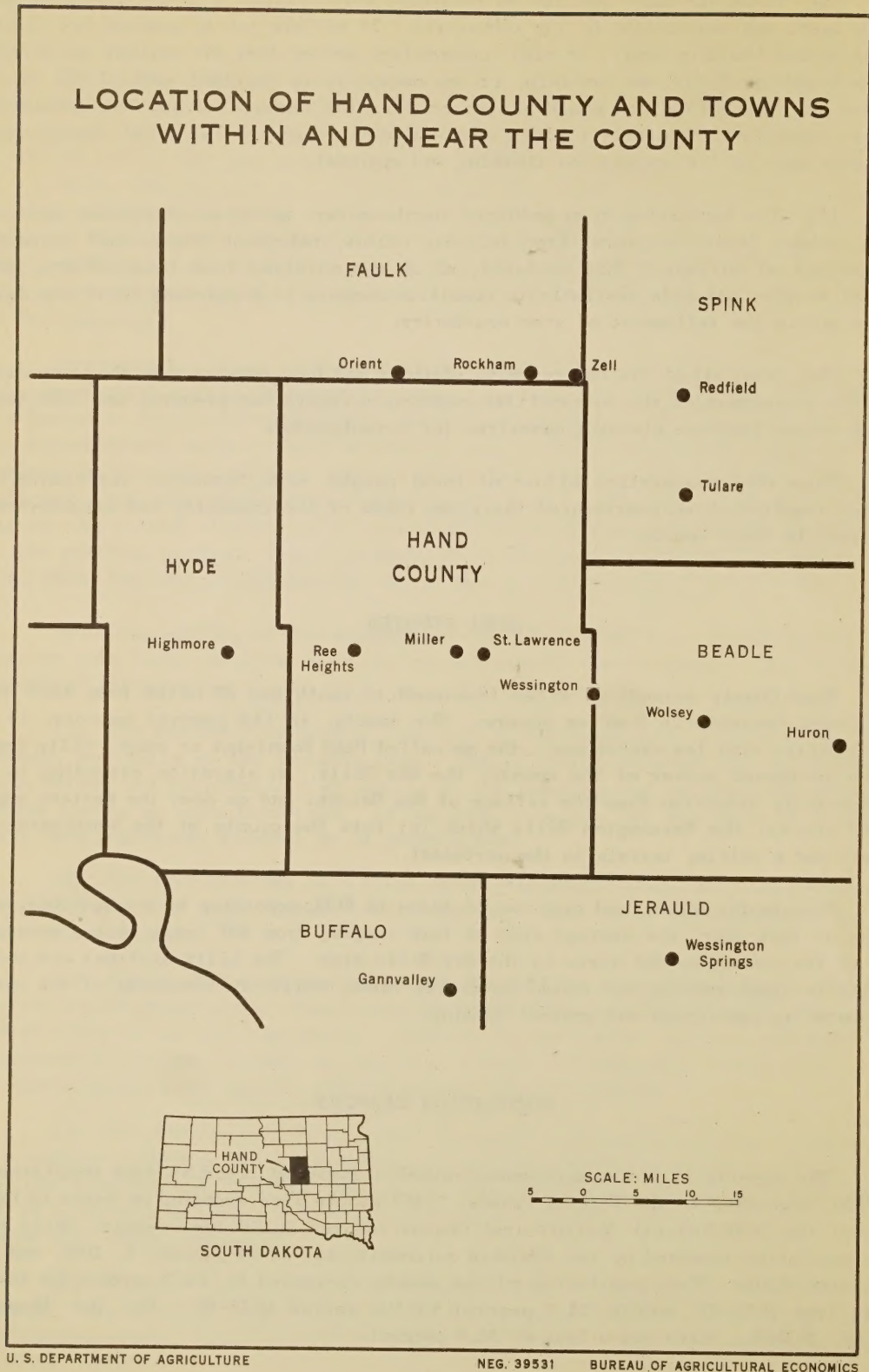


Figure 1

This net loss of nearly one-third of the farm population was concentrated in certain areas of the county. Relatively small losses in population were suffered by Spring Hill, Harrison, Ontario, Miller, Ohio, Logan, Riverside, and Pearl Townships during the last 5 years, and greater losses were suffered by most of the other townships. The areas devoted to intensive farming, in general, were the areas where heavy losses occurred, while the sections of the county devoted to ranching or production of livestock, notably the western border townships, reported the light losses of population.

In reporting the population data, the committee members used a family-location township plat. A county map showing location of families was constructed from the 40 township maps. This was used in the determination of community boundaries.

SERVICE AND NATIONALITY AREAS

This section deals with the church areas, trade areas, and nationality areas. As stated before, the service areas were delineated before the community areas, so that a background of information could be obtained. As shown by the discussion on the service areas and communities, a definite relationship is found between church, trade, and nationality areas and the boundaries of the communities.

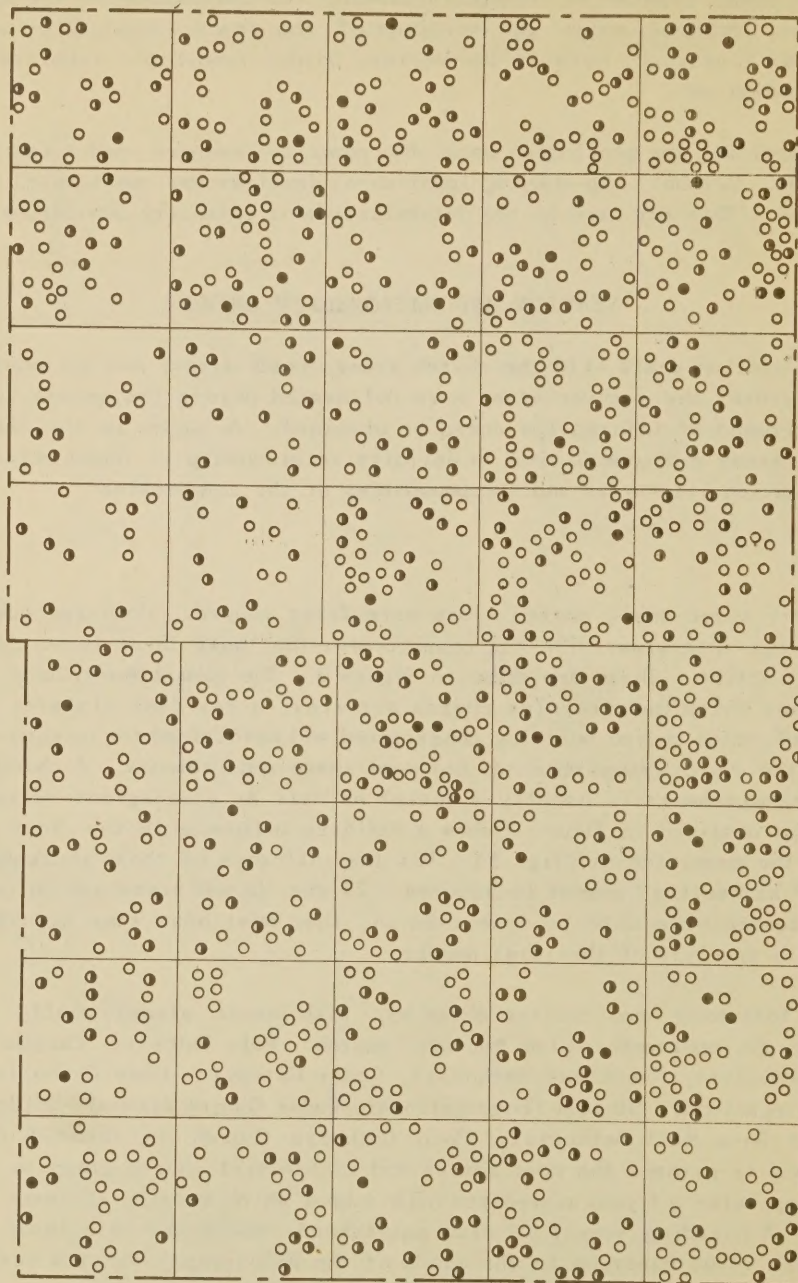
Church Areas

Thirty-three small church areas were first mapped. Upon rechecking it was learned through interviews with the committeemen that only 18 of these church groups are actually active. These are shown in figure 3. The committeemen have shown open-country areas which have regular church services, a resident minister, an active Sunday School, and a church building constructed and maintained for religious services, along with the church groups which do not meet these requirements. A church fulfilling these requirements is usually a social as well as a religious center, so that the few areas outlined in figure 4 show a definite influence in the final delineation offered by the committeemen (fig. 8). But the influence of those churches which are not classed as "active" cannot be ignored. If the church areas are so defined that the committeemen were able to draw them in, they must have some significance and importance in the life of the rural people.

The following open-country churches, with areas almost wholly within the county, meet the requirements of an "active" church: Polo Catholic, Carlton Methodist, Burdette Methodist, Greenleaf Methodist, Cedar Catholic, Como Catholic, Pleasant Valley Congregational, Wheaton Congregational, Cedar Congregational, Holden Congregational, and Rose Hill Methodist. Polo Catholic Church is located in Fairview Township, and is perhaps the most active and influential church group in the county. The church operates a 4-year accredited high school which enrolls students from nearby townships. A boarding school is also maintained, and there is a local crossroads store. There is no question in the minds of the Polo people about a meeting place. They think in terms of their church-school-store center.

The other open-country churches listed are not so intimately associated with a school or store, although a school or store is usually located within the same neighborhood. The committeemen speak of these active church areas as localities

LOCATION AND SIZE OF FARM FAMILIES, HAND COUNTY, 1940



○ 1-4 people in family ◐ 5-8 people in family ● 9 or more in family

Figure 2

CHURCH AREAS, HAND COUNTY

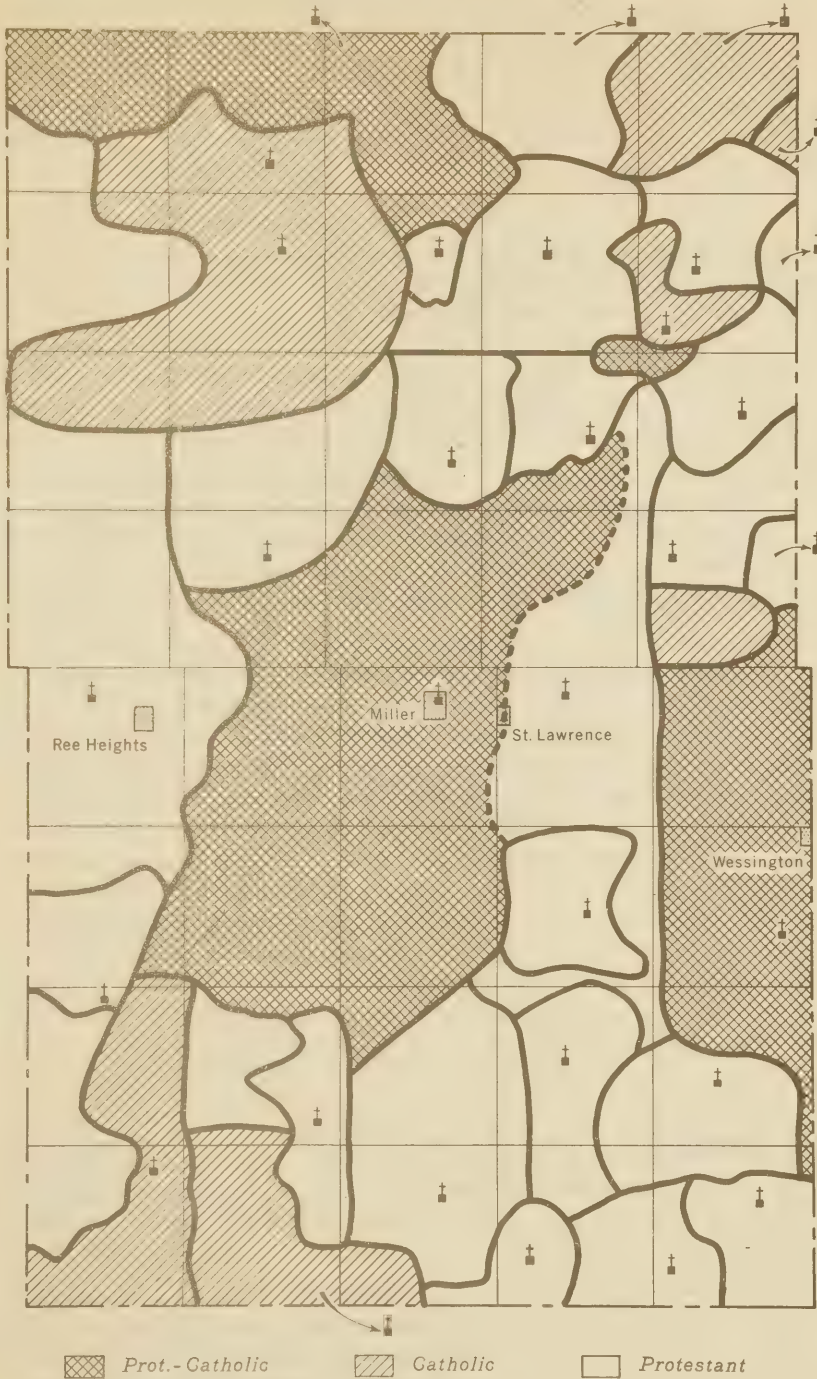


Figure 3

where most of the people go to the same church, do their trading at the same center, whose children belong to the same 4-H Club, and where perhaps an Extension homemakers' club is active. It seems clear from the township committee reports that a strong open-country church is one of the outward manifestations of a healthy neighborhood life, that it may do much toward insuring the success of a country store, hall, or other social institution, and that, in many instances, it is the core of the community. The church-store relationship was brought out by the local people when they mentioned the Burdette store in the Burdette-church area, the Polo store in the Polo-church area, and the Danforth store in the Pleasant-Valley-church area.

Trade Areas

Although the importance of small trade centers is clearly seen, there is a definite feeling on the part of the committeemen that people from even the most distant sections of the county are coming more and more to regard the county seat, Miller, as the real center upon which major activities depend. This development might be termed the *trend* of community organization in Hand County rather than the present situation. The trade areas as shown in figure 4 give proper emphasis to small centers such as Rockham, Orient, Ree Heights, St. Lawrence, Vayland, and others.

In describing the trade areas the committees usually outlined a number of places or centers which they regarded as most important. But gasoline, day-to-day groceries, and incidental items are bought at the nearest general store. The larger center (usually Miller, the county seat) attracts for movies, dances, fuel, clothing, professional services, marketing of livestock, and county business.

The emergence of Miller as the important center can be traced to many factors. One influence is a livestock auction pavilion where sales are held weekly. This activity brings people from throughout the county, and farmers are often heard to say, "I'll be in town Wednesday for the sale." Federal agencies active in the county have their headquarters at the county seat. AAA "sign-ups," Farm Security loans and grants, Social Security, Old Age Assistance, and Feed and Seed loan aid all must be arranged at Miller. The majority of the farmers in the county have some business to conduct with Federal and State agencies headquartered there. The AAA alone has better than 90 percent sign-up in the county. Farm families find it convenient to do their "trading" while in the county seat, with the result that the traditional neighborhood trading relationship is changing. The general concentration of trade and other services in Miller, together with ability of people to go longer distances through use of automobiles, has influenced development of improved roads leading to Miller. These improved roads, in turn, aid in making Miller the most important trading center.

Nationality Areas

A map of nationality areas, after being delineated in the same way as the church map, was critically examined by representative committeemen. In order to show the areas that have a predominant nationality group, a revised map was made. Figure 5 is a combination of the two maps—predominate nationality areas on which is superimposed small nationality settlements.

The settlement of Hand County is comparatively recent, as is all of South Dakota. The earliest settlements in the county were made in the 1880's and older inhabitants describe how nationality groups once dominated whole sections of the county. The Germans, who settled in Fairview Township, were probably the most significant group numerically. Their efforts to retain their own way of living and to develop their own Catholic Church and parochial school have kept the group unified. In developing county plans, recognition of social groups of this kind is essential.

TRADE AREAS IN HAND COUNTY, 1940



Figure 4

The Irish settlement in the county was made along the eastern border in Grand and Hulbert Townships in and near the town of Wessington, and a smaller group is located in York and Plato Townships in the central and northeast sections of the county. These people, like the Germans, possess a group consciousness that the local county organizations have learned to recognize in organizing county programs.

The southwest corner of the county is settled by Bohemians, as is also a small area west of the German Catholic group in Fairview Township.

The Swedes, Norwegians, Scotch, Swiss, and Belgians once lived in distinct settlements but, for the most part, have lost their nationality-group consciousness. Popular opinion among the committee members is that intermarriage and increased associations have contributed to a better relationship between the nationality groups.

COMMUNITIES IN HAND COUNTY, S. DAK.

Of the centers in South Dakota, 172 or three-fifths are villages of less than 500 people.² Because of the sparsely settled area, which does not permit the maintenance of a variety of services, these villages likely compare with the small and medium-sized centers found in other parts of the country. The same services, which are available in centers of 500 to 1,200 population in the East or South, will be found in the "large centers" in South Dakota, which range between 500 and 2,500 persons. One hundred and three such centers in South Dakota comprise one-third of the incorporated towns. Only 19 centers in the State have over 2,500 population, accounting for only one-sixteenth of the total incorporated villages and towns.

Small villages predominate in the Hand County area. The only large center in Hand County is the county seat, Miller (population 1,460), with various activities (such as trade, church, professional services, movies, etc.). The other centers in the county have less than 500 inhabitants, and 4 towns close by in adjacent counties are in the same population group (table 1).

All-weather roads have played a significant part in releasing the farm from the traditional isolation of the prairie homestead. A Federal highway crosses the county from east to west and north-south county and State roads feed to this highway, thereby tapping virtually all the rural sections. Thus, on Saturday, which is the chief trading day, farmers may be observed driving directly through the small village centers on their way to the county seat (fig. 6).

The communities thus tend to arrange themselves according to a newer and larger pattern. The presence of a church, a country store, or a "community" hall does not necessarily mean that a vigorous community life is also present, but rather that neighborhoods or small groups of farm people with like interests have attempted to satisfy a few of their social or economic needs.

In Hand County the country people regard Miller as the chief center of the county. The smaller villages are still community centers, and the rural neighborhoods are in the process of becoming a part of the smaller communities. This is to say that the two criteria for judging a community, Does the area serve the common interests of the people? and Do they feel that they belong there more than elsewhere?, necessitate an examination of the vitality of the neighborhood service centers. With but few exceptions the farmer committeemen report a traditional loyalty to the small

²South Dakota State Census, 1935.

NATIONALITY GROUPS AND AREAS IN HAND COUNTY, 1940



Figure 5

villages, and, at the same time, a practical attachment to the county seat. The irregular program of the open country churches, the inability of the crossroads stores to offer more than minimum services, the few and inadequate open country community halls, all reflect the trend in the adjustment of the people to the centralized, relatively well-supported, well-equipped, and well-managed schools, churches, and stores which exist in the larger center. But it should not be supposed that this transition is actually complete.

Table 1.- *Population of selected towns within and near Hand County, S. Dak.
1900 1940.*

	1940	1930	1920	1910	1900
Hand					
Ree Heights	258	339			
Miller	1,460	1,447	478	658	544
St. Lawrence	297	413	390	305	115
Beadle					
Wessington	485	657	728	1,915	
Wolsey	410	455	510	436	122
Huron	10,843	10,946	8,302	5,791	2,793
Faulk					
Orient	250	302			
Rockham	220	288	347	286	
Hyde					
Highmore	1,136	1,034	1,022	1,084	376
Jerauld					
Wessington Springs	1,352	1,401	1,618	1,093	320
Spink					
Redfield	2,428	2,664	2,755	3,060	1,015
Tulare	244	305	324		

Source: Federal Census, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940 (Preliminary)

The subcommittees have tried to outline those areas within which there is more in common than would be possible if the areas were bounded in any other way. It is true that these areas may not have a center where complete trading and other services are offered, but the people feel that they belong there more than anywhere else. The social organization should be based on that fact. This is the way the local people like to think of their communities. Furthermore, a church, a hall, or a school may be the center of a neighborhood within the area and this, to the farm people, is the basis of a community.

Twelve communities were outlined and mapped in Hand County. A brief description of each is presented in the following pages.

COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS IN HAND COUNTY

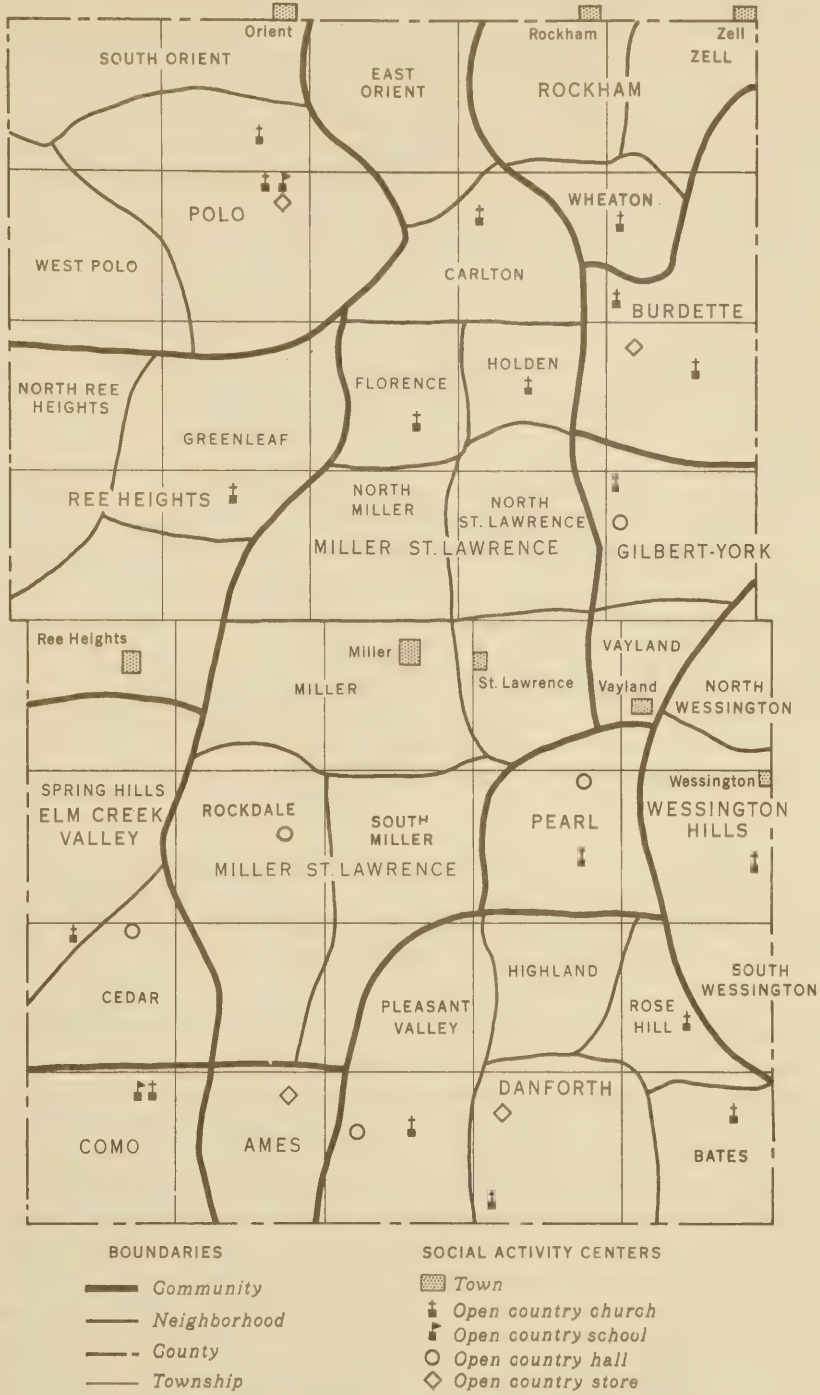


Figure 6

Table 2. - Rural communities and neighborhoods, Hand County, S. Dak.

Community and neighborhoods	Approximate number of farm families, 1940	Community and neighborhoods	Approximate number of farm families 1940
<i>Polo</i>		<i>Pearl</i>	
West Polo	26	Pearl	34
South Orient	23		
Polo	77	<i>Miller-St. Lawrence</i>	
<i>Ree Heights</i>		East Orient	35
North Ree Heights	17	Carlton	34
Greenleaf	26	Florence	20
Ree Heights	29	Holden	21
<i>Elm Creek Valley</i>		North Miller	37
Spring Hills	32	North St. Lawrence	45
Cedar	24	Miller	66
<i>Como</i>		St. Lawrence	33
Como	25	Rockdale	42
<i>Ames</i>		South Miller	36
Ames	22	<i>Gilbert-York</i>	
<i>Danforth</i>		Vayland	21
Pleasant Valley	44	Gilbert-York	33
Highland	17	<i>Burdette</i>	
Danforth	40	Burdette	59
Bates	25	<i>Rockham</i>	
Rose Hill	25	Wheaton	23
<i>Wessington Hills</i>		Zell	32
North Wessington	18	Rockham	31
South Wessington	54		

Polo Community, consisting of West Polo, South Orient, and Polo neighborhoods, will work as a unit, with a good meeting place at Polo.

This community, in the northwest corner of Hand County, comprises about 150 farm families. The majority are German descendants of the original families who came to what is now Fairview Township in the 1880's. The average size of family is somewhat higher in this district than in the rest of the county. The Catholic Church is predominant in the religious life of the area. The farmers in the northern half of Harrison, Spring, and Park Townships have developed local interests somewhat apart from the rest of the area but, for purposes of organization, regard themselves as a part of the Polo community. The Bohemian neighborhood in western Ontario and northern Campbell Townships find meetings of a general area nature convenient at Polo. The whole of Fairview Township and bordering parts of adjacent townships constitute the Polo neighborhood. The crossroads store at Polo is a center of some importance for the community area, although gravel-surfaced roads to the county seat have influenced the constant change in the boundaries of the community area. General farming is common in the eastern half, while the remainder of the community area is devoted to livestock production.

Ree Heights Community, consisting of North Ree Heights, Greenleaf, and Ree Heights neighborhoods will meet conveniently, and to the satisfaction of the neighborhoods, at the town of Ree Heights.

This community includes somewhat less than 100 farm families along the west-central border of the county. The natural center of the community is the town of Ree Heights. No dominant nationality is found in the area, although there is a cluster of German-Russians in Ree Heights Township. Most of the farmers are Protestant. The Methodist Church in Greenleaf Township forms a common-interest center for a neighborhood in that section. A north-south gravel-surfaced road extends through the community; an east-west oil-surfaced Federal highway passes through the area. The land to the north of Ree Heights is principally hay land while that to the south, extending into Elm Creek Valley community, is a ranching area. The farmers of the area south of the town of Ree Heights constitute a neighborhood where 4-H Club activities and rural school loyalties bring the people together. Much of the social and economic activity centers in the town of Ree Heights, although the farmers are increasingly favoring the county seat because of its many advantages, and the inability of the smaller center to meet their needs.

Elm Creek Valley Community consists of two neighborhoods, Spring Hills and Cedar. These two neighborhoods still function more or less independently, but for purposes of land use planning there is every indication that they will meet and work together.

The social activities of the Cedar neighborhood center around Cedar Hall.

Activity for the Spring Hill neighborhood centers around the open country schools and a Congregational Church serving the area.

Como Community is a small neighborhood community. Its social activity centers around the Catholic Church and Lowry school.

Ames Community is another relatively small community immediately east of Como community. The Ames open country store is the center of social life in this community.

Danforth Community consisting of Pleasant Valley, Highland, Danforth, Bates and Rose Hill neighborhoods would find a common meeting place at Danforth store, Pleasant Valley Hall, or at one of the rural schools.

This community, unlike most of the county, looks to trade centers outside the county for a large part of its services. Much of the trading is done at Wessington Springs, the county seat of an adjacent county. However, the neighborhoods within this community are tied together by their school and church activities and to a lesser degree by their crossroads store at Danforth. Approximately 140 families live in the three neighborhoods, which have as their centers of interest Bates Church, Danforth store, and Rose Hill Church. The people are predominantly Protestant and of German nationality. The Wessington hills, which extend through Rose Hill township in a southeasterly direction, have the effect of cutting off social participation with the people to the north and east of this community. General meetings at a centralized school in the community will attract people from throughout the area. A spirit of friendly cooperativeness between the neighborhoods is reported by the farmer committeemen.

Wessington Hills Community, consisting of North and South Wessington neighborhoods would meet together at the town of Wessington.

This community is small in area and has only about 50 families, but its topographical features make it a natural community. The Wessington hills form its entire western boundary, while an east-west oiled Federal highway bounds the community on the north. The town of Wessington is the center of social and economic life for the area. An improved farm-to-market road extends north and south on the county boundary line through the community. Irish families predominate but the community has many Scotch and German families. The only churches in the community are located at Wessington, where both Catholic and Protestant families find it convenient to attend. This is one of the areas that heretofore has not been recognized as a community in the organization of the county. But the farmers point out the unity of their interests, their common center, and the natural barrier which makes wide social participation with other areas difficult. The area of this community extends eastward into Beadle County. Interests in this community apparently are related to those of the area east in Beadle County, and Huron, a town of approximately 12,000, county seat of Beadle County, is no greater distance from most of the community than Miller.

Pearl Community is a small area of about 50 families with boundaries that have been determined by natural barriers and the routes of improved highways. The Wessington hills form the eastern boundary. The oiled Federal highway marks the community boundary on the north, while a county improved road forms the western boundary. As no east-west roads run through the Wessington hills, social relationships with the people of the town of Wessington are practically nonexistent. Community organizations have their meeting place at Pearl Hall in the community. Many of the people living in the community are of Scotch descent. It appears from the subcommittee reports that this community may become a part of the larger Miller-St. Lawrence community to the west. Already church facilities for these people exist only in the towns of Miller and St. Lawrence. Trading must be done outside the Pearl community. But the farmers in the area do not yet regard themselves as a neighborhood of another area. At the present time, for purposes of community organization, the local people will respond best if Pearl community is retained with its boundaries as indicated.

Miller-St. Lawrence Community is composed of north and south neighborhoods. The north neighborhoods of North Miller, North St. Lawrence, Holden, Florence, Carlton, and East Orient have several convenient meeting places; the south neighborhoods of Miller, St. Lawrence, South Miller, and Rockdale could meet easily at the town of Miller. The extensive north-south distance involved in this community may be somewhat deceiving at first glance, but its explanation is found in the topography and the direction of main roads. This is a peculiarity common to much of the Northern Great Plains, as the predominating east-west railways and accompanying distribution of towns tend to make communities centering about railroad towns extend north and south with relatively less east-west distance.

This area, known as the Miller-St. Lawrence community, comprises about one-fourth of the area of the county. It is a long, narrow strip extending about 20 miles north and 15 miles south of the two main centers, Miller and St. Lawrence. Altogether about 300 farm families live in this area. These people are predominantly Protestant in religious affiliation. The committeemen report no distinct nationality grouping, although Ohio Township has a cluster of Germans. Miller and St. Lawrence are the centers for the area, providing educational, recreational, health, and trade facilities.

A few other purely local centers for neighborhood groups are located in the community. A new hall in Rockdale Township and meeting places for church groups in Florence, Holden, and Carlton Townships provide convenient neighborhood centers. Particular mention should be made of the contributions of the school and church in St. Lawrence. These two institutions have been the hub about which the social, educational, and religious life of this section of the community revolves. Traditionally, St. Lawrence and Miller have been important trading centers. In recent years Miller with its county-seat advantages has forged ahead. However, according to the committeemen, one should not lose sight of the important contribution which St. Lawrence makes in community life. St. Lawrence's consolidated school has been a distinct factor in its area, and the community church in St. Lawrence is one of the stronger church organizations in the county. But it should be stated that the area is tying closer year by year, for reasons previously stated, to the county seat.

As pointed out concerning adjacent communities, it appears that the influence of the Miller-St. Lawrence community will project itself beyond its present boundaries so that more and more farm people will express common interests with this larger community. It is significant that every committeeman in the county has commented on the influence of the county seat, Miller, and that the effect on the rural communities is apparent in rural social organizations, the decline of the crossroads store, and the struggle of the open-country church. The farm people contributing to this study of rural communities point to the "Miller-St. Lawrence community" as a striking example of the larger community idea. It is apparent that the area of this community has been enlarged in recent years and is probably still in the process of absorbing adjacent neighborhoods.

Gilbert-York Community, consisting of the two neighborhoods Vayland and Gilbert-York, could meet effectively at either Gilbert-York Hall or at the village of Vayland. This area of about 90 farm families constitutes a rural community in which neighborhood loyalties center about social activities at York-Gilbert Hall and Vayland. Farmer organizations have no difficulty in bringing the people together from the entire area to either of these centers. The trade centers for the community are the towns of Miller and Wessington; although many families travel approximately 40 miles eastward to the larger town, Huron; where a greater variety of services are available. Most of the families are Protestant, although a Catholic settlement of about 20 families is found in York and Gilbert Townships. The community has a predominance of German and Irish families.

Burdette Community has a center at the crossroads store in Burdette Township which provides facilities for meetings. By tradition and custom the people of the area regard themselves as constituting a distinct community. The Burdette store and hall have long been important cogs in the social and economic scheme. Travel outside the community to a larger trading center is as often to Redfield, county seat of Spink County to the east, as it is to Miller. The farmers report attachments across the county line eastward. Approximately 80 families live in the Burdette community, almost equally divided between Catholics and Protestants. The Catholic families are of German and Irish extraction and live for the most part in the northern section of the community, in Wheaton Township.

Rockham Community, consisting of Rockham, Zell, and Wheaton neighborhoods would find a common meeting place at Zell town. Rockham town or a centrally located rural school are other possibilities.

This area in the northeast corner of the county constitutes a community of about 100 families and is similar to the Polo community. It is predominantly a German-Catholic community, although some Protestant families are reported in the western strip in Linn Township. No difficulties in community organization were recognized by the subcommittee. The rural neighborhoods are built around the rural schools, and community meetings can be held and representative attendance assured at the school buildings or at the town of Rockham. Like the Burdette community, the large trading center is more likely to be Redfield in Spink County than Miller in Hand County. A Catholic Church at the village of Zell provides church services for most of the community. The parochial school at Zell is a significant educational factor in the community.

SUPPLEMENTARY MAPS

(1) Figure 7 shows the extent of improved highways. This map makes more reasonable the outline of trade areas in figure 5. The roads shown are those which are graded and all-weather surfaced. Additional roads of earth construction traverse most of the section lines, although they may be impassable during the winter months and in wet weather.

(2) Figure 8 shows the school districts which, with one exception (Pleasant Valley Township), are based on the congressional townships and thus have little pertinent effect on the delineation of communities. The school districts were organized without reference to sociological areas and have retained their original boundaries.

The supplementary materials were gathered by the technician. These, along with the basic crop, climatological, and soil maps which are available in the county agent's office, are accessible to the individual committeemen and can be used at planning meetings.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The rural communities, as outlined in this report, point the way to a natural arrangement of local groups for organizational purposes in land use planning. If true representation is desired in county and community organization, each neighborhood should be represented on its community committee and each community on the county committee. Thus the importance of purely local interests and thinking will be given due consideration. As the community areas had not been determined before the initiation of the land use planning program in Hand County, the local people elected the members of the community committees on a township basis. Consequently, the neighborhoods are not fully recognized in the membership of the present community committees.

The county committee is composed of farmers and representatives of public agricultural agencies, but the present farmer membership is not based entirely on the neighborhood-community concept of representation.

It is recommended that the Hand County Land Use Planning Committee consider the possibility of reorganizing the land use planning structure within the county on the basis of the neighborhood and community locations described herein. Each community

FEDERAL, STATE, AND COUNTY IMPROVED ROADS IN HAND COUNTY, CORRECTED TO MARCH 1940

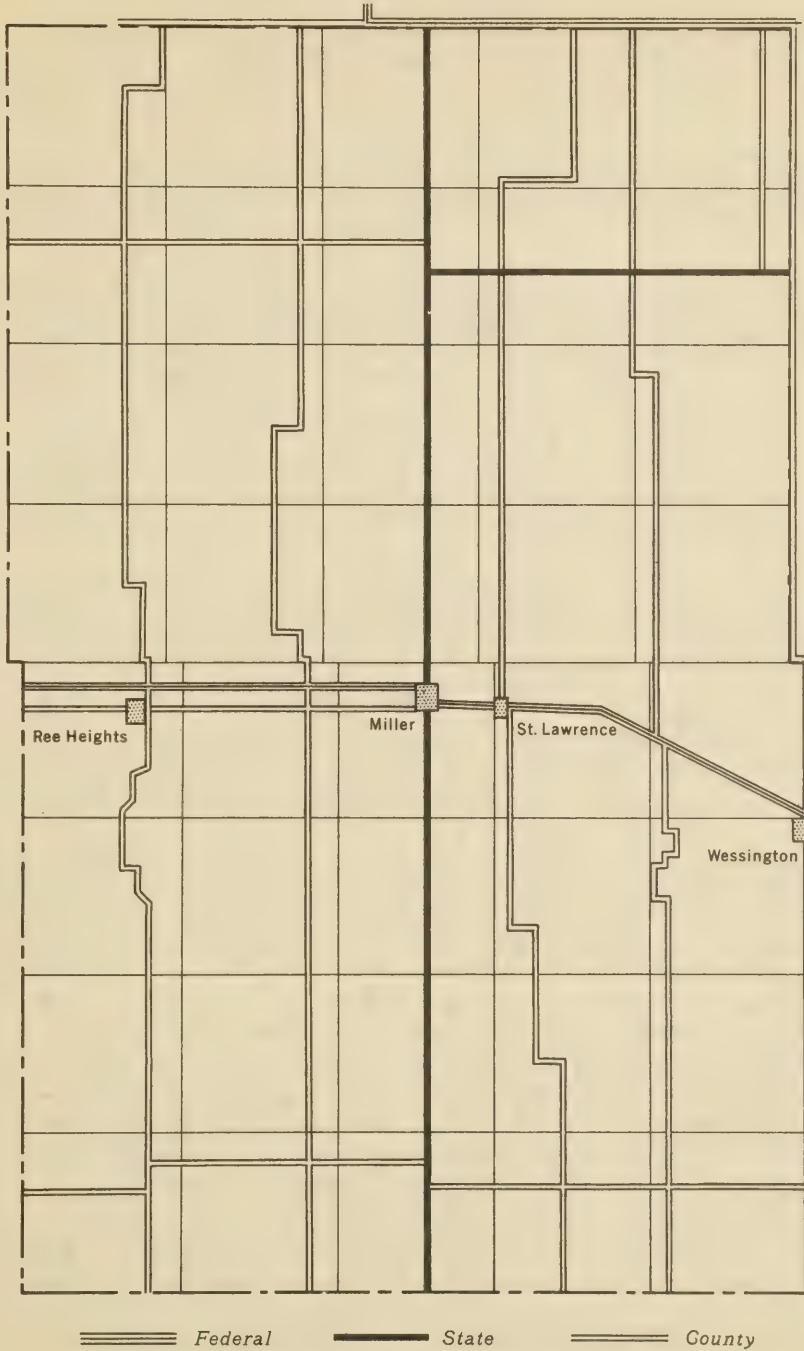


Figure 7

SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND RURAL SCHOOLS IN HAND COUNTY

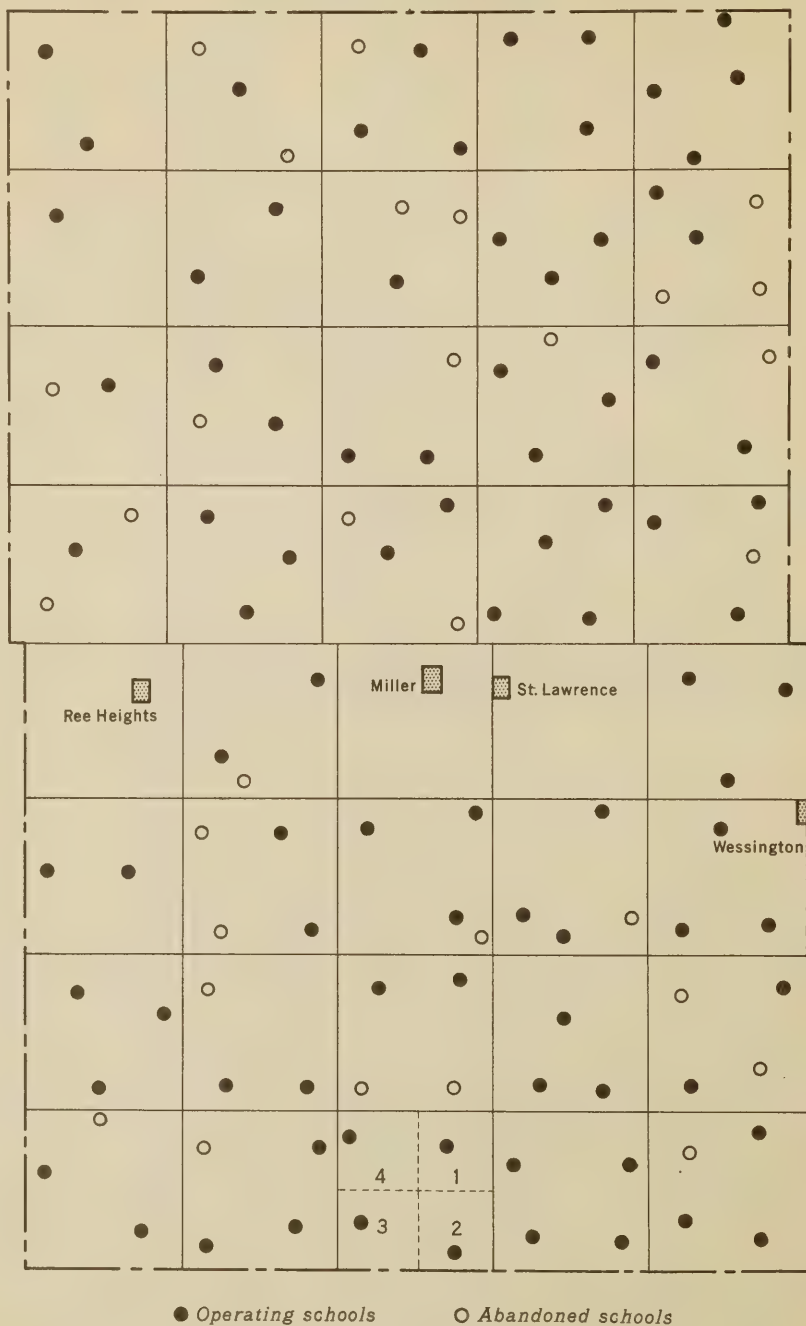


Figure 8

should be represented on the county committee, and the neighborhoods on the community committees. This would provide not only the best possible organization of working groups in committees, but would insure a broader and more effective participation of all farm families in the planning program through adequate representation on committees.

For the general guidance of people in other counties who may wish to survey their community pattern by a method similar to that used in Hand County, S. Dak.; the following comments may be of value.

(1) The work should be done at a season of the year when the farm people have time to attend meetings and to spend some time on the work at their homes. In South Dakota, this would probably be during the months of October and November, following the harvest season and before cold weather and impassable roads would slow the work.

(2) Especial care should be taken that the purpose and value of the survey is fully explained to the local groups when the subcommittee members are selected. The subcommitteemen are the key people, they are expected to describe their own neighborhoods, and will be considered by public officials and planning agencies as the local authorities on community organization.

(3) To insure that every committeeman does his work with reasonable promptness, an occasional report of progress might be circulated from the office of the county extension agent. At the first committee meeting, a schedule of future meetings should be agreed upon, with the committee deciding exactly how much work is to be completed and brought up for discussion at each meeting. If other plans fail to bring results, follow-up letters or individual interviews can be used.

(4) To facilitate the handling of individual committee reports, a subcommittee, composed of the county extension agent, the AAA county chairman, and the FSA county supervisor, might act as an advisory group to handle correspondence and file the reports of the individual committee members. This would obviate the necessity of having a community organization technician except for the first steps of organizing the project, and later assistance in coordination and interpretation of the material.

(5) A county subcommittee on organization could prepare its own community report to be presented to the county land use planning group. Obviously this report would not be a lengthy narrative but would consist of an outline of the steps involved in the study and a map to show the service areas and the community boundaries.

(6) Experience in working out the community areas in Hand County indicates that the neighborhood group is a significant basis for outlining the community area. In conducting further studies of this nature, it would be desirable to have the subcommittee outline the neighborhood area and then indicate the center to which the neighborhood feels most closely attached. It is the grouping of the neighborhoods about this center which outlines the community area.

The advantage arising from better representation of communities in the land use planning program, and the development of programs by effective working groups, should suggest to other agencies, both public and private, the desirability of using the natural community as a basis for local organization. The community organization idea might well be applied to the whole agricultural extension program. Organization on the community basis would be of advantage to the AAA program, the FSA, and other action agencies. Educational and religious institutions could make good use of an analysis of community organization because in analyzing the community they are, in turn, analyzing their own institutions and how they serve the people. A knowledge and understanding of the natural groupings of people, and how best to enlist the participation and support of these groups, is essential to the success of any program, public or private, which affects them in any significant way.

Variations of the method outlined in this report may be necessary to meet the needs of other counties. But it is hoped that this report of a demonstration of local participation will suggest the feasibility of conducting community studies on a similar basis elsewhere.

At the regular meeting of the Hand County Land Use Planning Committee on June 7, 1940, this community report, in preliminary form, was submitted to the county committee by the county extension agent, with the request that it be reviewed so that the community areas, as bounded, and the recommendations concerning community organization, might be included in the Hand County planning program. The county committee appointed a subcommittee of three members to review the report, and gave this committee power to accept or reject the report for the county committee. The subcommittee members were given copies of the report, and arrangements were made for a meeting with the technician at a later date. On June 26, 1940 a meeting was held at the county seat of Hand County, and the community report was discussed by the subcommittee and the technician. The statement made by the reviewing committee to the County Land Use Planning Committee follows:

Miller, South Dakota
June 26, 1940

The Subcommittee appointed by the Hand County Land Use Planning Committee to review the report on delineation of rural communities herewith submits its report and recommendations.

It is the unanimous decision of the subcommittee that the report 'Farmers Study Communities in Hand County, South Dakota' be accepted and become a part of the land use planning program. Certain minor corrections have been made to meet the desire of the subcommittee.

Further, that the report be mimeographed and distributed to members of the Hand County Land Use Planning Committee, and to the community committeemen, and to the membership of the subcommittee who made the report possible.

Further, that copies of the report be distributed to the rural schools, the city schools, and libraries of the county for the purpose of furthering planning work and for use as factual material on community organization in the county.

SIGNED: C. W. Gardner, Miller, Chairman
Mrs. L. B. Croll, Miller
Web L. Davis, Orient

APPENDIX

- A.* Questionnaire relating to nationality, trade, and church areas.
- B.* Questionnaire relating to farm organizations, nationalities, social participation, population movement, trading centers.
- C.* The location of rural social institutions.
- D.* The location of families and number of persons in households.
- E.* The location of neighborhood and community areas.
- F.* List of township committeemen selected to study the social aspects of land use planning.

A. Questionnaire relating to nationality, trade, and church areas.

Brookings, South Dakota

January 11, 1940

Township _____

Dear Committeeman:

- I. On the lines provided beside the map of your township, please list the nationalities of the people living in your township such as *German, Norwegian, Swiss, Bohemian*. Also please draw boundaries in the township map where these nationalities live. (Followed by an outline map of a standard township.)
- II. On the lines provided beside the map of your township, please list the *names of the towns* where the people in the township go to do their trading. Also please indicate by drawing boundaries on the township map where people in each part of the township go to trade. (Followed by an outline map of a standard township.)
- III. In the map of your township, please show where the people in each part of the township attend church. If the church is in the township, locate it; if it is outside the township, please state where it is. In this map also, boundary lines indicating church areas should be drawn in. (Followed by an outline map of a standard township.)

A self-addressed envelope which requires no postage is enclosed for your convenience in making a prompt reply. Your hearty cooperation is earnestly solicited.

Very sincerely yours,

Robert L. McNamara
Department of Rural Sociology
College Station
Brookings, S. Dak.

B. Questionnaire relating to farm organizations, nationalities, social participation, population movement, trading centers.

County _____

Township _____

III. Township Report

- A. Which of the following farm organizations are active in your township?
Check () those active.

Farm Bureau ()

4-H Club ()

Farmers Union ()

Home Extension Club ()

- B. From the following list of nationalities, select those which you know are represented in your township and rank them according to size of group. That is, if there are more Germans in your township than any other nationality, mark the German nationality number "1", if the second largest group is Bohemian, mark Bohemian number "2", etc:

Belgian ()

German ()

Bohemian ()

Irish ()

Canadian ()

Norwegian ()

Dane ()

Polish ()

English ()

Russian ()

Finn ()

Scotch ()

French ()

Swedish ()

- C. Does presence of nationality groups affect attendance at township meetings? If so, How?

- D. How many families moved out this Spring? _____

How many families moved in this Spring? _____

How many families moved out this Fall? _____

How many families moved in this Fall? _____

- E. From the following list of towns, select the one which you regard as the principal trading center for your township and mark it #1. Mark the next important trading center #2, the next important #3, etc.

Miller ()

Wessington ()

Ree Heights ()

Zell ()

St. Lawrence ()

Orient ()

Gann Valley ()

Rockham ()

Highmore ()

Polo ()

Tulare ()

C. *The location of rural social institutions.*

Please show the location of schools, churches, stores, and community halls by using the following set of symbols:

school, open	○	hall	□
church, open	⊙	school closed	●
store	△	church closed	⊕

County _____ Township Name _____

Township Number _____ Range Number _____

(Followed by an outline map of a standard township.)

~ ~ ~

D. *The location of families and number of persons in households.*

Show where each family lives by placing a circle in the approximate location, and place within the circle the number of people living in the home as of January 1, 1940. Remember that each of the small squares represents one hundred and sixty acres. For example, if a family group of five persons lives in the southeast corner of section one, it would be shown as is indicated on the attached map.

County _____ Township Name _____

Township Number _____ Range Number _____

(Followed by an outline map of a standard township.)

~ ~ ~

E. *The location of neighborhood and community areas.*

Now that you have located all the farm families in your township on a map, please outline what you think are the neighborhoods in your area. These neighborhoods will often extend beyond the township boundaries. Please show neighborhoods so that all the people who feel they belong together fall within the same boundary. These neighborhoods should include farmers who "neighbor" with each other, whose children go to the same public school, who go to the same church, are of the same nationality, who exchange work, or the majority of whom feel that they belong there.

Next draw a line to the community center to which you feel the neighborhood is attached. This point may be a town, an open country school, or some other center where most of the families go quite often. (Followed by an outline map of a standard township.)

F. List of township committeemen selected to study the social aspects of land use planning.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP - HAND COUNTY

NAME	TOWNSHIP	ADDRESS
1. Virgil Allen	Alpha	Miller
2. Elmer Beck	Cedar	Ree Heights
3. Sheldon R. Bottum	Burdette	Tulare
4. Dewey Bridenbaugh	Hiland	St. Lawrence
5. Wm. Bruggeman	Plato	Zell
6. Stanley Conkey	Gilbert	St. Lawrence
7. Mrs. J. Erwin	Plato	Rockham
8. Koran Fawcett	Spring Hill	Ree Heights
9. Mrs. John Hall	Harrison	Orient
10. Ernest Hancock	Rockdale	Miller
11. Joe Harris	Alden	Miller
12. Art Hartman	St. Lawrence	St. Lawrence
13. W. E. Hurd	Carlton	Rockham
14. Nels Jacobsen	Logan	Miller
15. Roy Janes	Linn	Rockham
16. Clifford Johnson	Ohio	Miller
17. E. J. Johnson	Pleasant Valley	Miller
18. Chris Lanz	York	St. Lawrence
19. Everett Leyson	Spring Hill	Ree Heights
20. Delbert Major	Hulbert	Vayland
21. C. C. McKay	Park	Orient
22. Mrs. Bruce Mitchell	Ontario	Orient
23. James Moncur	Florence	Miller
24. Leonard Nation	Greenleaf and Riverside	Miller
25. Wesley Palmer	Mondamin	Miller
26. Mrs. Jennie Pollock	Howell	Orient
27. Joe Roalstad	Midland	Miller
28. Clifford Rush	Holden	St. Lawrence
29. Frank Schaefer	Fairview	Orient
30. John Schaefer	Spring	Orient
31. Roy Shreffler	Glendale	Miller
32. Gerald Sieman	Como	Ree Heights
33. E. H. Simons	Grand	Wessington
34. V. O. Sisson	Wheaton	Zell
35. Fred Sluneka	Campbell	Miller
36. E. J. Suhn	Ree Heights	Ree Heights
37. George Welch	Pearl	St. Lawrence
38. Clifford Winn	Miller	Miller
39. Carl Winsell	Spring Lake	Wessington
40. Art Woodruff	Rose Hill	Vayland
41. N. A. Woodruff	Bates	Wessington

